

## The Proto-Terran Records Episode #1 Transcript:

### **Intro Voice:**

The Proto-Terran Records. Episode 1. Critiquing the other and questioning the guide.

### **Managing Researcher:**

Hello, whoever may have interested in this report. This is log number 2.1.2020 of the Proto-Terran program, discussing the activity of the specimen number 1. S1 began a series of insane babblings to itself that all surrounded the question “What is Sci-Fi.”

S1 noted that it deals with the unbelievable without losing sight of the possible or rather makes the improbable possible. It is Futuristic – often involving vast technological advancement. That it involves a moral commentary. That it deals with the “what if.” That it often involves a corrupt government or society. And that for all its eccentricities it is always a reflection of the present moment, the present society, and the present political climate. Whatever that might mean.

S1 also discussed various types of sci-fi as well as characters typically seen in the genre. We concluded our observations and left S1 alone to its ramblings. However later we checked the cameras and S1 had sketched a pair of rather odd stories into the wall of its containment chamber. One story involving journeying to an all-male civilization on the moon, a long space war, an encounter with lamps and women made out of grapes. The other was about a series of islands and some rather interesting characters, one of which is a community of cannibals. Uh, ghastly stuff.

My colleagues sat discussing how these tales could relate back to S1’s obsession with “Sci-fi.” They noted about the first story how it followed the theme of exploring a new world. All of the events were a byproduct of natural phenomenon. Everything was explained, such as the biology of the creatures. How the characters were hybrids and post human – um, creatures typically seen in the genre of sci-fi. How it featured technology such as the detachable eyes. How it uses other worldly reproductive biology and science to explore ideas of sexuality. And finally, that it is all a reflection of its time with a focus on colonization and war. I don’t know how my colleagues know what time this piece was from, but they seemed certain of the last point. I hope they aren’t talking about our time, management would not be happy with talk like that.

On the second story. How all of the inhabitants of the island are treated as sub-human. How it has grounding in reality with mention of Asia and spices; not sure where Asia is, but it made sense to me. How they speak of Fantastical grotesque images as real – an example of improbable to possible. And how it features the Character type of the explorer. How it brings up religion with mention of worshipping an Ox. How that emphasizes societies fixation on religion. And this idea of the foreign: foreign technology, foreign features...

*(Static)* We also talked about how one story claims that everything is a lie and the second claims that everything is true and how this effects the reader’s interpretation of the story...

*(Static)* The second story instills a fear of unknown cultures and people – not that that’s necessarily a bad thin... *(Cuts out)*

### **Specimen #1:**

Hello.... Hello. Is anyone listening? Anyone that’s not... one of them. I need someone to listen, to understand. They have started reading, listening, but they don’t fully understand yet.

Sci-Fi is a reflection of the present society. It is meant to make us think more critically about our own society and by extension, ourselves. They've said it already, but it is a very important aspect of the genre that must always be remembered.

One way of doing this is through the "other." Creating a distance through the use of creature and society that is not human, but possess human flaws. However, equally valuable to critique the other is to observe how the narrator reacts to the "other". This is the character meant to be our guide. The human representative. The one the audience is most likely to identify with and agree with. A lot can be learned of the human thought process by studying the actions of our own guide within this strange world.

Take "From a True Story" for example. Specifically, the scene with the grape woman. This scene is easy to write-off as just merely being bizarre and shocking. However, we as the audience had such a strong adverse reaction because the narrator, our guide, was shocked and disgusted by the scene. It's important to note that this is the only encounter we have with the female form in this story. They are erotic, they are powerful, and the men are horrified by them. Later the story will go into detail about the sexual practices of the moon men without the slightest negative reaction. However, in this moment, with the grape women, we are made to see it as terrible. One interpretation is that we are supposed to critique the "other," in this case the grape women, as a commentary on the dangers of over-sexuality. However, if you look at our guide's reaction with a skeptical eye it starts to look like a demonstration of the male fear of female sexuality.

The critical look at the narrator can also be applied to the Mandeville travels. When the narrator is talking about the island of Pathan, he talks about the tree that bears poison and how the Jews had apparently tried to acquire some with the purpose of poisoning all of the Christians. It is a terrifying thought of mass annihilation, and it is only from the speaker's perspective. As the guide, he assumes that the audience will be fully on his side. But the issue is, the narrator not the "others" in this case is the reflection of humanities' flaws. Lead by his obsession with religion he is stirring up anti-Semitism and fear of the unknown. Our guide is a ring leader of hate.

*(Static)* They're starting to cut me off... *(Static)* Just remember whoever's out there...  
*(Static)* This is sci-fi everything is a moral trial... *(Static)* No creature, or narrator is without fault... *(Static)* it is a critique of society *(Static)* a critique of us... *(Cuts out)*

### **Managing Researcher:**

Oh well, uh, we seemed to have got cut off there. I'll have a talk with technical services about getting that fixed. Regardless, S1 is clearly delusional and I, for one, see this first rendition of the project as a complete failure. I propose terminating the current experiment and trying again. This has been Log 2.1.2020 of the Proto-Terran Program.